

How do I become a licensed fishing guide in Indiana?

If you are operating only from the bank, a fishing guide does not need a state license. However, if you will be taking persons for hire in a boat of any capacity, you will need a charter boat license from the Division of Fish and Wildlife and periodic boat inspections from the Division of Law Enforcement. Please call Capt. Mike Portteus in the Division of Law Enforcement at 317-232-4010 to find out what is involved with boat inspections, as regulated under 312 IAC 5-14-2 and other applicable law. Information on the charter operator regulations are provided below and can be found under IC 14-22-15; 312 IAC 5-14-2 and 312 IAC 9-7-17. The charter boat operator's license cost \$100 per year, and requires submitting monthly reports from the date the license is issued and which indicate the waters fished, numbers of fish caught, and number of individuals fishing for hire. Monthly reports must be provided even if no waters are fished that month. However, a charter operator may submit a request to place the boat on Inactive Status for the remainder of a calendar year, during which time no fishing will occur and no monthly reporting is required. Alternating between inactive status and fishing with a calendar year is not allowed. You may contact Dorothy Corns in the Division of Fish and Wildlife at 317-232-4102 for a charter boat operator's license application.

Charter Boat License Statute

IC 14-22-15

Chapter 15. Charter Fishing Boat Operator's License

IC 14-22-15-1

License requirement

Sec. 1. An individual may not take another individual sport fishing for hire on:

- (1) Indiana waters;
- (2) waters containing state owned fish; or
- (3) boundary waters of Indiana

without a charter fishing boat operator's license issued by the director.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.15.

IC 14-22-15-2

Annual fee

Sec. 2. The annual fee for a charter fishing boat operator's license for a resident or a nonresident is one hundred dollars (\$100).

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.15.

IC 14-22-15-3

Validity; expiration

Sec. 3. A charter fishing boat operator's license:

- (1) is valid for one (1) year; and
- (2) expires December 31 of the year for which the license is issued.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.15.

IC 14-22-15-4

Records and reports

Sec. 4. (a) An individual having a charter fishing boat operator's license shall keep an accurate record of the following:

- (1) Each day's catch of fish.
- (2) Other related information that the department requires by rule.

(b) Before the fifteenth day of each month, the charter fishing boat operator shall report the previous month's record required under subsection (a) to the department on forms furnished by the department. The report shall be made even if no fish are caught.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.15.

IC 14-22-15-5**Failure to keep records or make reports**

Sec. 5. The director may:

- (1) refuse under IC 4-21.5-3-5 to grant, renew, or restore; or
- (2) suspend or revoke under IC 4-21.5-3-;

a license of an individual who fails to keep a record or make a report required by section 4 of this chapter.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.15.

IC 14-22-15-6**Operation without license**

Sec. 6. A person who acts as a charter fishing boat operator without a license in violation of section 1 of this chapter commits a Class B infraction.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.15.

IC 14-22-15-7**Violations regarding records and reports**

Sec. 7. A person who:

- (1) fails to keep accurate records in violation of section 4(a) of this chapter; or
- (2) fails to report monthly to the department in violation of section 4(b) of this chapter;

commits a Class C infraction.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.15.

Charter Boat License Administrative Rules**312 IAC 9-7-17 Charter fishing boat operator's license**

Authority: IC 14-22-2-6; IC 14-22-15

Affected: IC 14-22-15-4

Sec. 17. (a) An individual may not take another individual sport fishing for hire on:

- (1) Indiana waters;
- (2) waters containing state-owned fish; or
- (3) State boundary waters;

without a charter fishing boat operator's license issued by the director under IC 14-22-15-4 and this section.

(b) A license holder under this section shall, on a departmental form, keep legible and accurate daily fishing records of the:

- (1) species;
- (2) numbers, locations, and dates of fish taken; and
- (3) number of fishermen and hours fished;

while engaged in charter fishing. These daily records shall be recorded before the licensed fishing person departs the boat at the conclusion of the fishing trip.

(c) A license holder under this section shall, on a departmental form, prepare a monthly report of the information maintained on the daily fishing records. The monthly report shall be submitted to the director or the director's representative before the fifteenth day of each month following the month covered. The report shall be submitted each month regardless of whether charter fishing activity occurs in the month covered unless the license holder has submitted an Inactive License Form to signify that no fishing activity will take place for the remainder of the calendar year. The Inactive License Form shall be submitted to the director or the director's representative before the fifteenth day of the month following the month the license is deemed inactive.

(d) The director or the director's representative may, at any reasonable time, inspect the daily fishing records required under subsection (b) or IC 14-22-15-4. (*Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 9-7-17; filed May 12, 1997, 10:00 a.m.: 20 IR 2721; filed May 28, 1998, 5:14 p.m.: 21 IR 3723; filed Dec 26, 2001, 2:40 p.m.: 25 IR 1540; readopted filed Jul 28, 2003, 12:00 p.m.: 27 IR 286*)

312 IAC 5-14-1 Watercraft carrying passengers for hire; application; delegation; exemptions; maintenance of equipment in a good and serviceable condition

Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-15-7-3; IC 14-15-7-5

Affected: IC 14-15

Sec. 1. (a) This rule governs the inspection, maintenance, and operation of watercraft carrying passengers for hire upon public water.

(b) Except as provided in subsection c, a person must not operate a watercraft carrying passengers for hire unless the person complies with IC 14-15 and this rule. These requirements apply to the operator and the owner, regardless of whether an operator or owner is onboard.

(c) A person who presents valid and current documentation to evidence a watercraft is regulated and inspected by the United States Coast Guard, and who is in conformance with the regulation and inspection, is exempted from this rule.

(d) The division director may authorize a qualified person, other than an employee of the department, to conduct an inspection or other function of the department under this rule.

(e) An owner must maintain all equipment associated with a watercraft carrying passengers for hire in a good and serviceable condition as determined by a marine inspector.

(f) Operations relating to a watercraft carrying passengers for hire must be performed by or on behalf of the owner according to good marine practice and standards. (*Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 5-14-1; filed Mar 23, 2001, 2:50 p.m.: 24 IR 2389, eff Jan 1, 2002; filed Jan 5, 2005, 11:05 a.m.: 28 IR 1461*)

Boat Inspection Regulations

312 IAC 5-14-2 Inspections of watercraft carrying passengers for hire

Authority: IC 14-10-2-4; IC 14-15-7-3; IC 14-15-7-5

Affected: IC 14-15-6-3

Sec. 2. (a) An owner must annually apply to the department for an inspection of any watercraft carrying passengers for hire. The application must be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee according to the schedule established by IC 14-15-6-3.

(b) Upon receipt of the application, the department shall inspect the watercraft (and its equipment) to determine whether the watercraft conforms to good marine practice and standards, IC 14-15-6, and this rule. An inspection shall be conducted at least as frequently as follows:

(1) One (1) dockside inspection every year.

(2) One (1) dry-dock inspection every sixty (60) months.

(c) A watercraft must not be operated until an owner receives approval of the application.

(d) The department may inspect a watercraft carrying passengers for hire at any other reasonable time.

(*Natural Resources Commission; 312 IAC 5-14-2; filed Mar 23, 2001, 2:50 p.m.: 24 IR 2389, effective Jan 1, 2002; filed Jan 5, 2005, 11:05 a.m.: 28 IR 1461*)

Fee Schedule

All watercraft except for sailboats carrying six (6) or less passengers for hire on navigable waters: Dockside (\$50.00); Drydock (\$75.00).

All watercraft except for sailboats carrying six (6) or less passengers for hire on inland waters: Dockside (\$30.00); Drydock (\$30.00).

All watercraft except for sailboats carrying more than six (6) passengers for hire on inland waters: Dockside (\$75.00); Drydock (\$100.00).

Therefore, the annual fisheries charter license fee is an additional fee to the dockside and/or drydock inspections. Dockside inspections are yearly; drydock inspections are every 60 months.